

Louisiana's Hotline Talking Points

Why did I get this letter?

Medicaid records show that you have Medicare and full Medicaid benefits.

Why is Medicare going to pay for my medicines instead of Medicaid?

Congress passed a law in 2003 to expand Medicare coverage. This law makes new prescription drug coverage available to people who have Medicare. People who have both Medicare and Medicaid will have to get their prescription drugs through the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plans.

Why do I need extra help to pay for my prescriptions if I have both Medicaid and Medicare?

The new Medicare Prescription Drug Plans are expected to cost about \$37 a month. The extra help will cover the monthly premium and other drug plan costs for you and could save you over \$4000 in the first year.

What do I need to do to get this extra help?

Because you have Medicaid, you automatically qualify for the extra help. You DO NOT need to apply with the Social Security Administration for this extra help as long as you keep your Medicaid coverage.

What do I need to do to get this Prescription Drug Plan coverage?

Because you have Medicaid and Medicare now, you will have a Prescription Drug Plan selected for you to make sure you have prescription drug coverage on January 1, 2006. In October, you will get a letter to tell you which plan was selected for you. Then, starting in November, you will be able to switch plans if you find a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan that better meets your needs. At that time you should compare the prescription drugs you take with the list of those each plan covers. To get personalized help with choosing a Prescription Drug Plan in the fall, contact the Insurance Department (SHIIP) at 1-800-259-5301 or Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.

How will this change the way I now buy my medicines?

No one will know what Prescription Drug Plans will be available in Louisiana or any changes that may be made by the specific plans until October. We do expect that you will get a new prescription card in the mail from the Prescription Drug Plan that you will show to the pharmacist instead of the Medicaid card you now use. You will have to make small co-payments for your prescriptions.

The letter says I will have to pay a small co-payment for each prescription. How much is a small co-payment? Will I have any other prescription drug costs?

The co-payments will be between \$1 and \$5 for each prescription. These co-payments are the only costs you will have for your prescriptions.

What happens if I don't have the money to cover the co-payments?

Unfortunately, there are no provisions to cover the co-payments for you if you do not have the money.

Will I have to change the medicines I am taking? What do I do if my medicine is not covered by any of the Prescription Drug Plans? I cannot do without this medicine.

No one will know what Prescription Drug Plans will be available in Louisiana or which drugs are covered by the specific plans until October. Then, starting in November, you will be able to choose between at least two (2) Prescription Drug Plans. At that time you should choose a plan that meets your needs by comparing the prescription drugs you take with the list of those each plan covers. To get help with choosing a Prescription Drug Plan in the fall, contact the Insurance Department (SHIIP) at 1-800-259-5301 or Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.

Where will I get my prescriptions?

We don't expect that there will be any changes in where you get your prescriptions.

Will there be other changes in what Medicaid pays for beside drugs?

There will be no other changes to your Medicaid coverage as a result of this law.

What will happen if I have a question that is not on this list?

We will do our best to get an answer for you as quickly as possible. You may also contact the Insurance Department (SHIIP) at 1-800-259-5301 or Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.